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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6892

INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHBZ/AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE PRIORITY 0045

RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY 0020

RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY 0217

RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY 0607

RHMFIS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NDJAMENA 000153

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DOHA FOR SE GRATION

STATE FOR AF/C, AF/USSES, S/ES-O, DS/CC, DS/IP/AF,

CA/OSC/ASC

NSC FOR GAVIN AND HUDSON

LONDON FOR POL -- LORD

PARIS FOR POL -- D'ELIA AND KANEDA

ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR AU

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: CHAD UPDATE, AFTERNOON MAY 6: CHAD GOVT AIR FORCE
BOMB REBELS, ITS GROUND FORCES COUNTER-ATTACK IN SE CHAD

REF: A. NDJAMENA 151

[1B](#). DOHA 298

[1C](#). NDJAMENA 149

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11. (SBU) CAVEAT: This message is based on a variety of sources, some more reliable than others. We gather information from all sources and try to winnow the chaff from the wheat. Some reports re-circulate, gaining apparent momentum from repetition. Some reports are based on rumors or garble fact. Some reports are more or less easily verifiable; others are impossible to confirm at all. Overall, however, this message conveys as accurate a picture of the state of play here as we can give.

12. (SBU) CHAD REBELS STATUS: As of afternoon May 6, Chad rebel columns remain generally as they were this morning and yesterday (REF A) -- three or perhaps four columns of Chad rebels are strung out along the border from points SE of Abeche to the CAR/Sudan/Chad tri-border area, north and south of Goz Beida town. They appear to continue to remain in static positions 50-60 miles inside the border, while sending out small scouting patrols. Rebel troop strength is still reportedly in the 1,500 - 2,000 range. There appear to be additional rebel columns still inside Sudan, of indeterminate size. There are reports that rebel fighter morale may be flagging, and that ANT combatant morale is precarious.

13. (SBU) CHAD MILITARY REACTION: There was ground contact May 6 between ANT attackers and the rebel defenders near Kurfi, south of Goz Beida. Initial reports indicate that the ANT was successful in this engagement. Chadian government ground forces are still redeploying south out of their Adre base. Rebel scouting patrols may have reached Am-Timan, which has been recently reinforced with elite Chadian government military units. Chad government military air assets continue to attack rebel columns May 6. The ANT remains in defensive positions around Goz Beida town. Military and civilian intelligence headquarters in N'Djamena remain relatively quiet, although there are indications of increased military preparations in and around the city.

¶4. (SBU) MINURCAT: The UN is evacuating personnel to Goz Beida from nearby locations, in order to concentrate staff in a location where MINURCAT security forces are stationed. The UN has suspended humanitarian assistance operations in several locations.

¶5. (SBU) EX-EUFOR COMMANDER COMMENTS: Former EUFOR Commander General Ganascia, a French Army Brigadier, told Ambassador May 6 that the intent of recent rebel incursions into Chad appeared different from that of earlier incursions, and that the GOC response to them so far seemed prudent. Ganascia, who commanded the 5,200 EUFOR peacekeepers in Chad from November 2007 until March 2009, and who is winding up his mission this week, said that lack of rebel movement or apparent desire to engage subsequent to arrival in the vicinity of Goz Beida may be an attempt to (1) tempt Chad Government forces into precipitate and unplanned counter-attacks; (2) provoke defections from Government forces; (3) entice Government forces eastward from previously prepared defensive positions in central Chad; or (4) all of the above.

¶6. (SBU) Ganascia drew attention to the relative restraint thus far of Chad Government forces, which he considered a good sign, in that it indicated that the Government seemed to want to remain on the defensive as long as possible, its most prudent course of action. According to Ganascia, GOC aerial bombing was having a significant effect on the rebels, who did not seem to have responded with effective anti-air actions. Ganascia tended to discount the possibility of a rebel advance on the capital, unless Government forces suffered severe defections or made gross tactical mistakes, among which he said he would count abandonment of traditional strongholds west of Mongo. Ganascia indicated that some

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rebels seemed to be taking refuge from aerial bombardments in refugee camps, which he viewed as a negative development from the humanitarian point of view. The Chad high command, Ganascia said, might have learned enough from last year's hard lessons and from French military experts sent to train them in the meantime to understand how to exploit the advantages of a well-planned defense against not-preponderant attackers.

¶7. (SBU) CHAD-US-FRANCE: Chad Foreign Minister Moussa Faki Mahamat discussed the current Chad rebel situation with SE Gration in Doha May 5 (REF B). Enroute from Doha, Faki stopped in Paris May 6 for talks with French counterpart FORMIN Bernand Kouchner. According to GOF and press reports, the two discussed ways to avoid an escalation of the situation in the east and maintain the security, stability, and territorial integrity of Chad.

¶8. (SBU) CAPITAL CALM: The capital remained calm May 6, although rumors proliferate. International media reports of rebels shooting down a Chadian government helicopter are false. Traffic in and out of town, including across the Chad-Cameroon border appears normal.

¶9. (SBU) EMBASSY ACTIONS: We and all our partners, both civilian and military, continue to follow this situation carefully. We will continue to report opportunely on developments in eastern Chad. We continue reviewing emergency action procedures and sharing information with our non-official resident AMCIT and LES communities as appropriate. We have scheduled a AMCIT warden meeting for May 7.

¶10. (U) Minimize considered.
NIGRO